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DOCUMENTS

1. *The River Plate Voyages, 1798-1800*

ALTHOUGH the inauguration of the trade of the United States of America with China and the Far East is mentioned and discussed in almost all histories of the United States, that with the countries on the Rio de la Plata, with whom our commercial and political relations have been continuously important in equal degree, is scarcely ever mentioned by historians. A careful study and analysis of the beginnings of the trade of the United States of America with Buenos Aires and Montevideo reveals an interesting chapter in our South American relations, twenty-five years before Monroe gave expression to his famous Doctrine and twelve years before the South American wars of independence began.

The many restrictions which fettered the trade of Spain in the New World were slowly forced apart by the economic conditions resulting from the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars in Europe. The United States of America was then in almost exactly a similar position to that in which she was from August, 1914, to February, 1917, but whereas the merchant marine of the United States is to-day being re-created, a hundred and fifteen years ago eighty per cent. of the foreign trade of the United States was carried by ships made within her borders. The United States at the beginning of the nineteenth century had vessels enough to spare to supply many trade-routes throughout the world, and to avail themselves of every opportunity to use their shipping abroad. Thus Captain Samuel Day, of the United States frigate *John* of Philadelphia, which arrived at Montevideo in November, 1798, invokes the Spanish royal *cédula* of November 18, 1797, which allowed neutral vessels to be engaged in the carrying trade between the Spanish colonies, in his petition to the commandant-general and superintendent of arrivals in Montevideo, which is dated November 28, 1798, and reads as follows:¹

Señor Gobernador Juez de Arribadas y Comandante General de Marina:—Don Samuel Day, Capitán de la Fregata Anglo-Americana nombrada el *Juan* de filadelfia propia de Don Juan Leamy,² un Comer-

¹ Archivo de la Aduana, Montevideo, 1798.

² John Leamy had an office at 69 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, in 1800 (see *Philadelphia Gazette*, July 28, 1800, and December 30, 1800). His name also appears in the *Philadelphia Directory* for 1809. He advertises vessels for freight or charter in the *Philadelphia Gazette*, November 27, 1798.

ciante en aquel Continente dónde procede, segun consta de los Documentos que prestó (suplicando se me devuelvan), ante V.S. con la veneracion devida me presento y Digo que hallándome en este puerto á Disposicion de V.S. prevalecido en la Real Cédula de 18 de noviembre de 1797 que permite la introducción y extracción de frutos de Colonia á Colonia, y conduciendo en dicha fragata porcion de tablazon y duelas de que carece este pais, según es notorio y consta á V.S. muy bien, para socorrer en alguna parte la necesidad, A V.S. pido y suplico con la sumision y respeto devido, se sirva permitirme el desembarco de esto cargamento y su venta que conduciese á esta Real Aduana para el arreglo de los derechos correspondientes á S.M. y demás, como asimismo sus productos extraerlo en frutos de este pais con destino á Filadelfia por cuenta de mi armador, á Donde debo regresar en cumplimiento con las órdenes que me tiene comunicado ó adonde mas considere me convenga, todo lo que resulta en beneficio del Real Erario, y por lo mismo no dudo aceda V.S. á mi solicitud por Equidad y Justicia que espero de la que tan saneamente V.S. distribuye. Montevideo, Noviembre 28 de 1798.

A higher official, José Prevost de Oliver, whom students of the history of South American literature will remember as the author of much mediocre poetry, granted the permission above requested on November 29, 1798, and the *John* sailed from Montevideo for Philadelphia on March 14, 1799.

I can find no trace of the arrival of any other United States vessel at Montevideo before the *John*. She was one of the three vessels which are mentioned as lying in Montevideo harbor on March 2, 1799, when the English missionary vessel *Duff* arrived there,³ and as being "the first traders to that port".⁴

In this connection the following quotation from the *Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser* for July 11, 1799; is of interest as showing the relative importance at that time of the Spanish-American trade to the United States:

By letters received at Philadelphia from Cadiz it appears that his Catholic Majesty, having taken into consideration the injuries which the Spanish commerce has sustained, and the advantages derived to his enemies by the illicit intercourse carried on with the Spanish colonies in South America, has ordered by a public edict, dated the 9th of April last, that the Spanish ports in South America be shut against all neutrals as well as the subjects of belligerent nations.

Two days later the same paper prints the edict of April 9, 1799, above referred to, in full, and comments on it, saying: "The intelligence it conveys is important to the commercial interests of this country."

³ The story of the *Duff* was advertised in the *Philadelphia Gazette* for May 15, 1800.

⁴ See *Philadelphia True American*, October 14, 1799.

The next United States vessel to arrive at Montevideo of which I can find any record was the bark *Alert* of Boston, Captain Robert Gray, which was carried into Montevideo by a French privateer called *La Républicaine* on December 14, 1798. So far as is known, this was the southernmost capture of any United States vessel during the naval war of the United States with France. The name of Gray's captor is spelt in four different ways—"Le Bozce", "de Bouce", "Le Borec", and "Laborec", his given name being Pedro Maria in Spanish (Pierre-Marie in French). His attorney at Montevideo addressed the following petition to the authorities there, apparently about the middle of December, 1798:

Excmo Sor

Don Manuel Vasquez apoderado General de Don Pedro Maria Le Bozce ante la notoria justificación de V.E. dice que el 14 del corriente fondeó en este Puerto el Bergantin Americano nombrado *La Alerta* con carga de viveres, y algunos efectos, apresado por el corsario *La Republicana*, al mando del citado mi parte: y el 13 de dicho la Zumaca Portuguesa nombrada *San Antonio y Animas*, con carga de Azucar, lo que participó á V.E. para que se digne concederme su superior permiso para la venta de estos dos buques, y sus cargamentos. Por tanto á V.E. se suplica de sirva probar como llebo pèdido, Excmo. Sr.,

MANUEL VAZQUEZ.

Robert Gray's petition to the *juez de arrivadas y comandante general de marina* of Montevideo, José de Bustamante, is interesting, when we bear in mind that on June 15, 1798, United States merchant vessels were authorized to arm and defend themselves against the attacks of French vessels, and on July 8 of that year were given permission to make prize of all such French armed vessels as they might meet. The petition reads as follows:

Señor Gobernador:

Don Roberto Gray capitan del Bergantin norteamericano nombrado *Alert* ante V.S. segun mejor proceda parezco y digo:—Que por el presente espera se me ha devuelto un escrito que presenté á V.S. en que le daba razon de las circunstancias de mi aprezamiento y conducción á este Puerto por la Fragata corsaria Francesa nombrada *la Republicana* existente en él, y de los fundamentos que tenia para decir por nulidad de dicho Acto, y el de la venta de mi Bajel y cargamento executado aquí por dicho corsario Francés no debio apresarme, porque los Estados Unidos de America estan en paz con su Nacion, en que yo no le hize insulto alguno, en que el estar armado mi Bergantin y contener su patente la expresion de poder hostilizar á los buques franceses en caso de ser acometido por ellos, no es una razon y deba autorizar su hecho, sino una precaucion defensiva á que ha dado notoria causa la Republica Francesa, defraudando al comercio maritimo de mi Nacion mas de diez millones de pesos por medio de semejantes depredaciones, y en que la venta del expresado mi Buque y cargamento no debio permitirse

licitamente en esto Dominio sin haber procedido antes con audiencia mia la declaracion de buena presa, V.S. se sirvió prover por auto del once del corriente, que no correspondiendo á este Gobierno el conocimiento del Juicio que promovía, se me devolviese dicho escrito, para que usase de mi derecho donde y como mejor me conviene. Y como para ejecutarlo así necesito de la constancia que tambien pedia en el citado escrito, relativa á que con citacion contraria se me diese testimonio de todo lo obrado en enclaramiento de la legitimidad de mi apresamiento y venta de mi Buque y carga executado en este Puerto por el corsaro Luis de Bouce,

A V.S. pido y suplico que habiendome por presentado, y por contrahido este escrito á la unica y directa solicitud de dicha constancia y testimonio, se sirva V.S. proveer y mandar se me dió que en caso de no haber procedido para la expresada venta, formalidad de inventario, ni declaracion judicial alguna, se me dé certificacion en terminos claros y precisos, y de la orden ó disposicion en que pudo fundarse este Gobierno para permitir a Le Bosc semejante venta, sin la precedencia de tales requisitos, por ser de justicia que pide jurando en derecho necesario, etcetera.

Otro si digo: Que por tener urgente necesidad de restituirme a mi Pais en primera ocacion, he otorgado Poder General á Don Francisco Antonio Maciel de este comercio y vecindario, en cuya atencion declaro ante V.S. que desde ahora, presente yo o ausente, puedan entenderse y notificarsele á Maciel como si fuese en mi Persona todas las Providencias y resultas de este negocio pues así procede de Justicia que imploro ut supra.

Otro si digo: Que por convenir á mi derecho me quedo con dos tantos legalizados de este escrito en Justicia que pido ut supra.

ROBERT GRAY.

Bustamante's comment on the foregoing is noteworthy:—

Hagale entender á esta parte, que no habiendo pedido por la suya se recibiese informacion concerniente á sus ideas, no hay de que darsele testimonio sobre lo cual usará su derecho, pidiendo la actuación de las Ynformaciones que le convenga producir por lo que respecta al certificado que pide de la orden ó disposicion en que pudo fundarse este Gobierno para permitir al ciudadano Le Bosc la venta de su Buque y carga:—despachesele por el escribano de esta subdelegacion con citacion de la parte de Laborec, glosando en él lo que conste por su oficina.

BUSTAMANTE. Dr. Aguiar.

Proveyó y firmó el decreto que antecede el Señor Gobernador militar y político de esta Plaza, Juez de Arribadas de este Puerto, y subdelegado de Rentas y Real Hacienda en Montevideo á diez y nueve de Febrero de 1799.

There are no further papers in this file⁵ nor have I been able to discover any others in the Montevideo archives bearing on the fate of the *Alert*. Captain Robert Gray again sailed from Boston

⁵ *Inventário é Índice General* (Montevideo, 1898—for full title see list toward end of article), vol. II., p. 153, no. 71, f. 10, año 1798. [But see editorial note appended to article. Ed.]

on November 21, 1800, in command of the United States schooner *James*, for Rio de Janeiro, whence she sailed on March 7, 1801,⁶ arriving at Buenos Aires April 18, 1801, with stone ballast and some iron.

That other vessels met with the same fate as the *Alert* in the River Plate at this time may be inferred from the following extracts from the *Federal Gazette* and *Baltimore Advertiser* for July 18 and August 9, 1799, respectively:

On July 5, 1799, the ship *John*, Captain Day, of Philadelphia, four months out from the River Plata for Philadelphia, was spoken by the *Alexander*, Captain Dodge, from Canton to Boston. Captain Day says he left there two French frigates and three American ships, and that two American had been carried in there since the capture of the brig ———, Captain Gray of Salem. . . .

The following is an extract from the Journal of Mr. Waddell, mate of the ship *Diana*, Captain Bunker, which arrived at Baltimore, August 9, 1799:—On March 28 (1799) there arrived at Maldonado the brig *Sally*, Captain Haskell, belonging to Boston, bound to Botany Bay, she had sprung her foremast and main boom and put in to repair. Mr. David Spear of Boston and Captain Haskell came to Montevideo, but were coolly received and ordered down to their vessel in 24 hours. But, by the intercession of the Governor's Secretary, the time was prolonged to 48 hours. They wished to make sale of their cargo here, but not being acquainted with the proper method of doing that business, were obliged to return, and, after repairing, to leave the River.

Nine United States vessels are known to have been at Montevideo, and at least one at Buenos Aires, during the year 1799; and in that same year we hear of twelve whaling ships from Nantucket and four from New Bedford being off the coast of Chile, three being detained "at St. Mary's, in Chile, which is in Lat. 37 S., near the city of Concepcion, and about 70 leagues from St. Jago", while at least one vessel arrived at New Bedford from a whaling cruise from "the Brazils".⁷ Those at Montevideo were: the ship *Angenoria*, Captain Chale or Chase, of Newport, Rhode Island, in September of that year;⁸ the ship *Diana*, Captain Bunker, of Baltimore, on April 2;⁹ the ship *Two Friends*, of New York, Captain Shaler, which arrived at Montevideo from Bordeaux on May 20, 1799, and was still there in September;¹⁰ the ship *Fugitive*, Captain Lancelot Davison,

⁶ *Telégrafo Marítimo* (Buenos Aires, 1914 edition, pp. 84-85).

⁷ *Federal Gazette and Baltimore Advertiser*, July 5 and September 9, 1799. The Isla de Santa Maria is meant.

⁸ *Philadelphia True American*, November 15, 1799; *Inventário e Índice Geral*, vol. I., p. 307, no. 122. f. 22.

⁹ *Philadelphia True American*, May 30, 1799.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, November 15, 1799; *Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, August 9, 1799.

of Philadelphia, also in September;¹¹ the ship *Liberty*, Captain Andrew Miller, of Philadelphia, which sailed from Montevideo for Philadelphia in June, 1799;¹² the brig *Maria*, Captain William Henry, from New York, which arrived at New York from Montevideo on November 12, 1799;¹³ the ship *Murdock*, which arrived at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, from "River La Plata" in November, 1799;¹⁴ the brig *Pennsylvania*, Captain Francis Knox, of Philadelphia, which was at Montevideo in the latter part of 1799 and finally returned to Philadelphia on July 15, 1800;¹⁵ the brig *Rose*, Captain John Meany, of Philadelphia, which arrived at Philadelphia on May 29, 1799, "in 57 days from the Isle of Lobos near the Falkland Islands, and sometime before from the Rio de la Plata".¹⁶ The one known to have been at Buenos Aires during this year was the frigate *Palmyra*, which was admitted to Spanish registry at that city on November 26, 1799, by a decree issued on that date by the viceroy of the Rio de la Plata, the Marquis of Avilés. She was renamed *Nuestra Señora de Belen* and was sold to Pedro Duval for 16,000 pesos. On January 4, 1800, she was despatched by him from Buenos Aires for "friendly foreign ports".¹⁷

The permission for the *Liberty* to leave Montevideo and the accompanying accounts of her cargo are of particular interest, since they relate to the first shipments, of which we have record, of freight from Buenos Aires on a United States vessel, being shipments of tallow from Manuel de Sarratea of Buenos Aires, afterward prominent in the movement for Argentine independence, to parties in Havana—shipments lightered over from Buenos Aires to Montevideo and there put on board the *Liberty*.¹⁸

¹¹ Philadelphia *True American*, November 15, 1799; *Inventário é Indice General*, vol. I., p. 484, no. 126, año 1799.

¹² Philadelphia *True American*, May 26 and September 30, 1799; *Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, August 9, 1799. The *Philadelphia Gazette* for August 29, 1798, mentions Captain Andrew Miller as being in command of the Philadelphia ship *Mary* in the West Indies in July, 1798.

¹³ Philadelphia *True American*, November 15, 1799; *Inventário é Indice General*, vol. II., p. 319, no. 123, f. 12, año 1799.

¹⁴ Philadelphia *True American*, November 11, 1799.

¹⁵ *Philadelphia Gazette*, May 12 and July 15, 1800; *Inventário é Indice General*, vol. II., p. 581, no. 116, f. 9, año 1799.

¹⁶ Philadelphia *True American*, May 30, 1799; *Inventário é Indice General*, vol. III., page 14, no. 58, f. 9, año 1799. She is apparently referred to as being at Montevideo on March 13, 1799, in the file in the Archivo de Aduana de Montevideo for 1799 regarding the *Liberty*, Captain Andrew Miller.

¹⁷ See Document no. 30, for the year 1800, Archivo Nacional, Buenos Aires.

¹⁸ See file of papers in Archivo de la Aduana, Montevideo, entitled "Fragata Anglo-Americana nombrada *La Libertad*, Su Maestre Don Andres Miller, 1799." The signatures are almost illegible.

Real Aduana de MONTEVIDEO, Año de 1799.

Don José Prego de Oliver, Administrador y Tesorero de la Real Aduana de esta Ciudad, y Alcabalar [?] Partido

Por lo que toca á Reales Almojarifazgos, Alcabalas, y Ramo Municipal de Guerra:—Salgan de esta Ciudad y llevense abordo de la fragata Anglo-Americana nombrada *La Libertad*, su Maestre D. Andres Miller, que se halla junta y anclada en este Puerto, y proxima á dar la vela, para el de la Havana: los frutos y efectos que, despues de haversele pasado la correspondiente visita de fondeo, se han permitido embarcar en ella con arreglo á Reales órdenes é Instrucción en la forma siguiente, en virtud de permiso especial del Exmo. Sr. Virey de estas Provincias comunicado al Sr. Governador subdelegado de Real Hacienda de esta Plaza, queda traslado á esta oficina en estos terminos:

El Excelentísimo Señor Virey de estas Provincias y Superintendente General de la Real Hacienda en ella, con fecha del cuatro del corriente, me dice lo siguiente:—Presentado Don Manuel de Sarratea del Comercio de esta Capital en solicitud de que se conceda permiso para despachar á la Habana con carga de sebo, carnes y astas la fragata *Libertad*, y [las bergantinas *Rosa* y *Diligente* que de (?)] los Estados Unidos de America se hallan en ese puerto:—he resuelto por decreto de esta fecha lo siguiente:

“Aunque las reales órdenes que permiten á los buques neutrales el hacer expediciones á puertos de America previene su preciso retorno á los de la Peninsula: como el viaje que intentan hacer á la Habana la fragata *Libertad*, y las bergantines *Rosa* y *Diligente* deve resultar á esta Provincia el beneficio de la extracción de sus frutos interrumpida por la guerra, y de proveer á la necesidad que de ellos tiene la expresada isla, pudiendo retornar desde allí á España sin contravenir esencialmente á lo mandado por su Majestad: vengo en conceder el permiso que solicita para cargar de sebos, carnes y hastas, previa las formalidades establecidas en la Instrucción de Resguardos, los referidos tres buques, con destino á la citada isla de la Havana, apanzandose antes que han de dirigir su viaje allí precisamente con lo que extraigan, y de [?] documentos que lo acredite, á cuyo fin se librará con inserción de este Decreto el Sr. Governador de Montevideo la correspondiente orden, de la cual se pondrá copia por cabeza á los registros que se formen en aquella Real Aduana; tomándose razón en la de esta Capital:—Lo que traslado á Usted para su inteligencia y cumplimiento, debiendo otorgarle en esa oficina, y á satisfaccion de Usted las fianzas que se previenen por su Excelencia. Dios Guarde á Usted muchos años. Montevideo y Marzo trece de mil setecetos noventa y nueve. JOSÉ DE BUSTAMANTE Y GUERRA. Sr. José Prego de Oliver.”

1. D. Manuel de Ortega embarcó: en nombre de Dn. Manuel de Sarratea, y por cuenta y riesgo de este á consignación en la Havana de D. José Ramon Mantelo y Otero, residente en aquella Plaza, mil ciento y diez marquetas que contienen mil quinientos ochenta y un quintales de sebo derretido, y Dos mil y quarenta y dos lios [?] de carne salada, con peso de dos mil quintales—Ambas cosas libres de derechos en virtud de Real Orden.

2. Sarratea embarcó en los mismos terminos que la partida antecedente cincuenta marquetas de sebo, con peso de noventa y cinco quin-

tales y una arroba, que en mayor partida vinieron de Buenos Aires con guía número 703 de aquella Real Aduana: cuyo fruto es libre de derecho en virtud de la Real Ordenanza.

3. El mismo Sarratea embarcó en los propios terminos que la partida antecedente noventa y seis marquetas con peso de ciento setenta y cuatro quintales de sebo derretido, igualmente venido de Buenos Aires, con guía número 754 de aquella Real Aduana en mayor partida, y como va otro es libre de derechos.

4. El expresado Sarratea embarcó en los mismos terminos que las anteriores partidas doscientos marquetas de sebo derretido con peso de trescientos quintales, libre de derechos, y venido de Buenos Aires con guía número 999 de la Real Aduana.

5. El citado Sarratea embarcó en los citados terminos Trescientos marquetas de sebo derretido con peso de cuatrocientos y cincuenta quintales, que vinieron á este puerto en mayor partida con guía número 1031 á la Real Aduana de Bs. Ayres, y es libre de derechos.

Cuyos frutos son los mismos que conduce esta fragata, y no adeudan derechos algunos á su Magestad; de que certificamos, y firmamos en Montevideo á diez dias del mes de junio de mil siete cientos noventa y nueve.

JOSEF PREGO DE OLIVER. JOSE SIMON DE SIERRA [?]

Y el expresado cargador Sarratea ha otorgado fianza por la que se obliga á presentar en esta Administración en el preciso termino de diez y ocho meses primeros siguientes Documentos que acredite haver desembarcado, y entregado en el puerto de la Havana, precisamente como se manda por el acto del Superior Gobierno.

[*Remainder in large part illegible:*] de estas Provincias invento [?] por cabeza de esta registro, todos los frutos y efectos que con [?] y [?] efecto á [?] á derecho con su Magestad sobre el cargo que justamente se le deberá firmar [?], en cuya comprobación lo firmo su Merced, de que doy fee en este papel comun que se via [?] por privilegio en Montevideo fecha [al retro?]

OLIVER.

URAUQUI,
Escribano de S.M.

The following references to United States citizens and ships may be found in the *Inventário é Indice General Alfabético de los Expedientes que forman el Archivo de la Escribanía del Gobierno y Hacienda desde el año 1752 á 1898* (Montevideo, published by the Uruguayan government, 1898, and sold by A. Monteverde and Co., Calle 25 de Mayo 263, Montevideo). The references are here arranged in the order of their occurrence in the volumes of that inventory:

I. 307. No. 122, f. 22. Año 1799. Don Samuel Chace, Fragata *Agenina*.

I. 355. No. 110. Año 1841. Don Juan H. Coe. Decreto del Superior Gobierno en su favor.

I. 483. Nos. 34 and 35, f. 2. Año 1798. Don Samuel Day, *San Juan* de Filadelfia.

- I. 484. No. 126, f. 17. Año 1799. Don Lancelot Davison, *Fragata Fugitivo*.
- II. 16. No. 135, f. 4. Año 1807. *Fragata Swift* de Newport.
 No. 145, f. 6. *Fragata General Davis*.
 No. 166, f. 5. *Fragata Betsey*.
- II. 153. No. 71, f. 10. Año 1798. Don Roberto Gray, *Bergantin Alert*.
- II. 319. No. 123, f. 12. Año 1799. Don Guillermo Henry, *Fragata Maria*.
- II. 320. No. 83, f. 6. Año 1800. Don Bernardo Huggins, *Bergantin Molly*.
- II. 581. No. 116, f. 9. Año 1799. Don Francisco Knox, *Bergantin Pennsylvania*.
- III. 14. No. 58, f. 9. Año 1799. Don Juan Meany, *Bergantin Rosa*.
- III. 423. No. 75, f. 4. Don Tomas Pearce, *Goleta Galante*.
- IV. 190. No. 87, f. 4. Año 1800. Don N. Smith, *Fragata Small*.
- IV. 367. No. 136, f. 3. Año 1802. Don Jorge Tompson, *Fragata Aurora*.

The following references to vessels are all that can be found in the Archivo General de la Nación, Buenos Aires, for 1800 and 1801:

1. No. 16. 1800. *Prosperity* (*Nuestra Señora del Rosario*), despatched May 24, 1800.
2. No. 22. 1800. *Mercurio*, despatched to Peninsula, March 17, 1800. (Note that the *Resolute* became the *San Francisco Solano* and was despatched May 19, 1800.)
3. No. 30. 1800. *January* (*Nuestra Señora de Belen*), despatched January 4, 1800, by D. Pedro Duval.
4. No. 7. 1801. *Angelina*, despatched by Don Pedro Duval, February 25, 1801.
5. No. 17. 1801. *Palmyra*, despatched April 11, 1801.
6. No. 23. 1801. *Charlotte*, arrived at Ensenada de Barragan, January 8, 1801; despatched May 20, 1801, by Pedro Duval and Manuel Baudrix.
7. No. 29. 1801. *Superior* (*San Roque*), despatched August 8, 1801.
8. No. 24. 1802. *New American*, despatched May 28, 1802.
9. For documents connected with the stay in Buenos Aires of the *Minerva*, Captain Hall, of Boston, see Archivo General de la Nación, legajo 22, expediente 286, comerciales, and legajo 23, expedientes 289 and 295. The latter (295) is very important. The *Minerva* was consigned to Tomas Antonio Romero and to Manuel Aguirre.
10. The arrival of the *Aurora*, Captain Thompson, of Philadelphia, is in legajo 24, expediente 18.

CHARLES LYON CHANDLER.

[NOTE. The Robert Gray who appears as the master of the *Alert* was unquestionably the Captain Robert Gray, of the *Columbia*, who achieved fame by discovery of the Columbia River in 1792. Many papers concerning the case of the *Alert* are in the files of the

United States Court of Claims at Washington, either under case no. 15 in the files relating to the French Spoliation Claims or in the volume relating to *Alert's* and other vessels in A in the series lettered "Disallowed Claims on Spain, Convention 1819". The chief facts are contained in the instructions received by the captain from the group of Salem men who owned the *Alert*, in a petition and power of attorney from Gray, February 9 and 11, 1799 (Spanish originals, signed by Gray, and translations), and in depositions of William Fairfield, the mate, taken in 1822, and of Christopher Kilby, mariner, taken in 1824, when Daniel Webster was counsel for the claimants. The *Alert* was a brigantine of 123 tons, built at Salem in 1798. The cost of vessel and cargo was \$20,356.15. She sailed from Salem on September 10, 1798, under instructions to proceed directly to the northwest coast of America, then, after a season or two spent in trading, to Canton, China, then home. The cargo, as stated from memory by Gray in his petition to the governor of Montevideo (but the detailed inventories are also preserved),

consisted of five thousand yards of blue broadcloth, five thousand yards of common Brittannias, four thousand small looking glasses, a considerable quantity of ivory combs (the number I do not now recollect), a large quantity of fish hooks of various sizes, a considerable number of iron pots, seventeen barrels of Powder, six thousand gun flints, sixty muskets, twenty eight pairs of Pistols, a hundred pounds of thread of all colours, thirty suits of clothing, consisting of jackets and trowsers, four hundred pounds of leaden balls, thirty pairs of shoes, a hundred and forty (Fresadas),¹⁹ a great number of iron knives and forks, together with many other articles . . . the whole amounting to the sum of eighteen thousand hard dollars.²⁰

The capture was made on November 17, about five hundred miles east of Rio de Janeiro. The captor, *La Républicaine*, is declared to have been, not a public vessel of the French Republic, but a privateer whose commission had expired, with a crew made up of Frenchmen, Spaniards, Portuguese, Germans, Englishmen, and negroes. Captain Gray and all his crew, except the mate and a boy, were taken on board the privateer, and came into Montevideo late in January or early in February, 1799. Meanwhile the *Alert*, brought in by a prize crew, had been taken into possession by the Spanish officials at Montevideo, discharged of her cargo, hove out and coppered, and fitted out under Spanish colors, with ten or twelve guns

¹⁹ Blankets.

²⁰ Doubtless liberal additions to the original cost were made for interest, freight, and insurance. A deposition by Peter C. Brooks, of Boston, puts the contemporary rate of insurance on voyages to the destinations named and back at thirty-five per cent.

and a large Spanish crew, for the Pacific Ocean, for which she sailed about January 11. The decree of the Spanish governor and admiralty judge was to the effect that he had no jurisdiction. No doubt the history of several other of the vessels mentioned by Mr. Chandler could be followed out in Washington archives. Ed.]

2. *The Confederacy and the Declaration of Paris.*

For the following documents from the papers of the late William Henry Trescot, chiefly memoranda in his own handwriting, nearly contemporary with the events which he describes, the readers of the *Review* are indebted to his son, Mr. Edward A. Trescot, of Pendleton, South Carolina, who contributes the following prefatory note:

Mr. Trescot died in May, 1898. Among his papers were found the following. As the negotiations to which they refer are a part of the history of that period, I do not believe that their publication would be contrary to any wish or desire on his part. Furthermore, by their publication in the *American Historical Review* they will be preserved in a more permanent form and be accessible to any one who may feel interested in the subject.

Mr. Trescot was appointed Assistant Secretary of State by President Buchanan June 8, 1860. Because of the absence and illness of Gen. Lewis Cass the Secretary, he was made Secretary under warrant by the President, June 20, and served as such until the return of Gen. Cass late in the fall.

Mr. Trescot was a South Carolinian and as his state was on the eve of secession, he felt it his duty to resign and did so on December 10, 1860. By the early part of 1861 he had returned to his home in Charleston, so that, when Mr. Bunch and Mons. Belligny, the British and French consuls respectively at Charleston, urged upon him on July 19, 1861, that he induce the Confederate States government to adhere to certain articles of the Declaration of Paris, Mr. Trescot was, and had been for nearly eight months, a private citizen.

Prior to Mr. Trescot's appointment as Assistant Secretary of State, he was secretary of legation at London. After the close of the Civil War, during which he had served on the staff of Gen. R. S. Ripley, he returned to Washington and as the executive agent of the state succeeded in bringing about a better understanding between the state and federal governments as to the enforcement of the Reconstruction laws and not only secured the release of much of the state's property but that of many individuals, which had been seized by the federal authorities. He subsequently served the United States in a varied series of diplomatic appointments.

Mr. Trescot's papers on the subject include also copies of Lord John Russell's instructions of May 17 (18), 1861, to Lord Lyons at Washington, of the latter's instructions of July 5 to Robert Bunch, and of Bunch's dispatch of August 16 to Lord Lyons, but these have been several times printed, and are not here repeated.